General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 March 2009

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 64 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/63/430/Add.2)*]

63/183. Missing persons

The General Assembly,

Guided by the purposes, principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations,

Guided also by the principles and norms of international humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[1] and the Additional Protocols thereto, of 1977,[2] as well as international standards of human rights, in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[3] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[4] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[4] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[5] the Convention on the Rights of the Child[6] and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[7]

Acknowledging the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,[8] and looking forward to its entry into force,

Recalling all previous relevant resolutions on missing persons adopted by the General Assembly, as well as the resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council,

Noting with deep concern that armed conflicts are continuing in various parts of the world, often resulting in serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law,

---

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970–973.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1125, Nos. 17512 and 17513.

[3] Resolution 217 A (III).

[4] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[7] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[8] Resolution 61/177, annex.

Noting that the issue of persons reported missing in connection with international or non-international armed conflicts, in particular those who are victims of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, continues to have a negative impact on efforts to put an end to those conflicts and causes suffering to the families of missing persons, and stressing in this regard the need to address the issue from a humanitarian perspective, among others,

Considering that the problem of missing persons may raise questions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as appropriate,

Being cognizant that States that are parties to an armed conflict have a responsibility for countering the phenomenon of missing persons and determining the fate of missing persons and for recognizing their accountability as regards implementing the relevant mechanisms, policies and laws,

Bearing in mind the effective search for and identification of missing persons through traditional forensic methods, and recognizing that great technological progress has been achieved in the field of DNA forensic sciences, which could significantly assist efforts to identify missing persons,

Recalling the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, in particular its general objective 1, to "respect and restore the dignity of persons missing as a result of armed conflicts or other situations of armed violence and of their families", adopted at the Twenty-eighth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 2 to 6 December 2003, and resolution 3 entitled "Reaffirmation and implementation of international humanitarian law: preserving human life and dignity in armed conflict", adopted at the Thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2007,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General of 18 August 2008 on missing persons, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/155 of 19 December 2006,[9]

Taking note with appreciation also of the ongoing international and regional efforts to address the question of missing persons and of the initiatives undertaken by international and regional organizations in this field,

1. *Urges* States strictly to observe and respect and ensure respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, as set out in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[1] and, where applicable, in the Additional Protocols thereto, of 1977;[2]

2. *Calls upon* States that are parties to an armed conflict to take all appropriate measures to prevent persons from going missing in connection with armed conflict and account for persons reported missing as a result of such a situation;

3. *Reaffirms* the right of families to know the fate of their relatives reported missing in connection with armed conflicts;

4. *Also reaffirms* that each party to an armed conflict, as soon as circumstances permit and, at the latest, from the end of active hostilities, shall search for the persons who have been reported missing by an adverse party;

[9] A/63/299.

5. *Calls upon* States that are parties to an armed conflict to take all necessary measures, in a timely manner, to determine the identity and fate of persons reported missing in connection with the armed conflict and, to the greatest possible extent, to provide their family members, through appropriate channels, with all relevant information they have on their fate;

6. *Recognizes*, in this regard, the need for the collection, protection and management of data on missing persons according to international and national legal norms and standards, and urges States to cooperate with each other and with other concerned actors working in this area, inter alia, by providing all relevant and appropriate information related to missing persons;

7. *Requests* States to pay the utmost attention to cases of children reported missing in connection with armed conflicts and to take appropriate measures to search for and identify those children and to reunite them with their families;

8. *Invites* States that are parties to an armed conflict to cooperate fully with the International Committee of the Red Cross in establishing the fate of missing persons and to adopt a comprehensive approach to this issue, including all such legal and practical measures and coordination mechanisms as may be necessary, based on humanitarian considerations only;

9. *Urges* States and encourages intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to take all necessary measures at the national, regional and international levels to address the problem of persons reported missing in connection with armed conflicts and to provide appropriate assistance as requested by the concerned States, and welcomes in this regard the establishment and efforts of commissions and working groups on missing persons;

10. *Calls upon* States, without prejudice to their efforts to determine the fate of persons missing in connection with armed conflicts, to take appropriate steps with regard to the legal situation of the missing persons and the need of their family members, in fields such as social welfare, financial matters, family law and property rights;

11. *Stresses* the need for addressing the issue of missing persons as a part of peacebuilding processes, with reference to all justice and rule of law mechanisms, on the basis of transparency, accountability and public involvement and participation;

12. *Welcomes* the panel discussion on the question of missing persons held at the ninth session of the Human Rights Council, and takes note of the request of the Council to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a summary of the panel's deliberations;[10]

13. *Takes note* of the request of the Human Rights Council to its Advisory Committee to prepare a study on the best practices in the matter of missing persons and to submit that study to the Council at its twelfth session;[10]

14. *Invites* relevant human rights mechanisms and procedures, as appropriate, to address the problem of persons reported missing in connection with armed conflicts in their forthcoming reports to the General Assembly;

---

[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/63/53/Add.1), chap. II, decision 9/101.

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution, including relevant recommendations, to the Human Rights Council at its relevant session and to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session;

16. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, the competent United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations and international humanitarian organizations;

17. *Decides* to consider the question at its sixty-fifth session.

70th plenary meeting
18 December 2008

United Nations A/RES/63/184

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 March 2009

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 64 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/63/430/Add.2)*]

63/184. Protection of migrants

The General Assembly,

Recalling all its previous resolutions on the protection of migrants, the most recent of which is resolution 62/156 of 18 December 2007, and recalling also Human Rights Council resolution 9/5 of 24 September 2008,[1]

Reaffirming, in the year of its sixtieth anniversary, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[2] which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour or national origin,

Reaffirming also that everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State, and to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country,

Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[3] and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[3] the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[4] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[5] the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[6] the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[7] the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations[8] and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families,[9]

---

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/63/53/Add.1), chap. I.

[2] Resolution 217 A (III).

[3] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1465, No. 24841.

[5] Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[7] Ibid., vol. 660, No. 9464.

[8] Ibid., vol. 596, No. 8638.

[9] Ibid., vol. 2220, No. 39481.

Recalling also the provisions concerning migrants contained in the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits,

Underlining the importance of the Human Rights Council in promoting respect for the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, including migrants,

Taking note of advisory opinion OC-16/99 of 1 October 1999 on the Right to Information on Consular Assistance in the Framework of the Guarantees of the Due Process of Law and advisory opinion OC-18/03 of 17 September 2003 on the Juridical Condition and Rights of Undocumented Migrants, issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights,

Taking note also of the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 31 March 2004 in the case concerning *Avena and Other Mexican Nationals*,[10] and recalling the obligations of States reaffirmed therein,

Recalling the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006 for the purpose of discussing the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development, which recognized the relationship between international migration, development and human rights,

Noting the second meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, organized and hosted by the Government of the Philippines from 27 to 30 October 2008, and recognizing the inclusion of a discussion on migration, development and human rights as one of the steps to address the multidimensional nature of international migration,

Recalling its resolution 62/270 of 20 June 2008 on the Global Forum on Migration and Development, as adopted, in which, inter alia, it recognized that exchanges of information and expertise, consultation and closer cooperation between the Global Forum and the United Nations could have a positive impact,

Noting the International Meeting on the Protection of the Rights of Children in the Context of International Migration, held in Mexico City on 30 September and 1 October 2008, and co-organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Emphasizing the global character of the migratory phenomenon, the importance of international, regional and bilateral cooperation and dialogue in this regard, as appropriate, and the need to protect the human rights of migrants, particularly at a time in which migration flows have increased in the globalized economy and take place in a context of new security concerns,

Bearing in mind that policies and initiatives on the issue of migration, including those that refer to the orderly management of migration, should promote holistic approaches that take into account the causes and consequences of the phenomenon, as well as full respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants,

Noting that many migrant women are employed in the informal economy and in less skilled work compared with that of men, which puts those women at greater risk of abuse and exploitation,

---

[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 4* (A/59/4), chap. V, sect. A.23; see also *Avena and Other Mexican Nationals (Mexico* v. *United States of America), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 12.

Concerned about the large and growing number of migrants, especially women and children, who place themselves in a vulnerable situation by attempting to cross international borders without the required travel documents, and recognizing the obligation of States to respect the human rights of those migrants,

Stressing the importance of regulations and laws regarding irregular migration being in accordance with the obligations of States under international law, including international human rights law,

Stressing also that penalties and the treatment given to irregular migrants should be commensurate with their infraction,

Recognizing the importance of having a comprehensive and balanced approach to international migration, and bearing in mind that migration enriches the economical, political, social and cultural fabric of States and the historical and cultural ties that exist among some regions,

Underlining the importance for States, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, to undertake information campaigns aimed at clarifying opportunities, limitations and rights in the event of migration, so as to enable everyone to make informed decisions and to prevent them from utilizing dangerous means to cross international borders,

1. *Calls upon* States to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women and children, and to address international migration through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and through a comprehensive and balanced approach, recognizing the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants, and avoiding approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability;

2. *Also calls upon* States to ensure that their laws and policies, including in the areas of counter-terrorism and combating transnational organized crime such as trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, fully respect the human rights of migrants;

3. *Calls upon* States that have not done so to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families[9] as a matter of priority, and requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to raise awareness of and promote the Convention;

4. *Urges* States parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime[11] and supplementing protocols thereto, namely, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air[12] and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children,[13] to implement them fully, and calls upon States that have not done so to consider ratifying or acceding to them as a matter of priority;

---

[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2225, No. 39574.

[12] Ibid., vol. 2241, No. 39574.

[13] Ibid., vol. 2237, No. 39574.

5. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on its seventh and eighth sessions;[14]

6. *Requests* all States, international organizations and relevant stakeholders to take into account in their policies and initiatives on migration issues the global character of the migratory phenomenon and to give due consideration to international, regional and bilateral cooperation in this field, including by undertaking dialogues on migration that include countries of origin, destination and transit, as well as civil society, including migrants, with a view to addressing, in a comprehensive manner, inter alia, its causes and consequences and the challenge of undocumented or irregular migration, granting priority to the protection of the human rights of migrants;

7. *Expresses concern* about legislation and measures adopted by some States that may restrict the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, and reaffirms that, when exercising their sovereign right to enact and implement migratory and border security measures, States have the duty to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law, in order to ensure full respect for the human rights of migrants;

8. *Takes note with appreciation* of the measures adopted by some States to reduce detention periods for irregular migrants in the application of domestic regulations and laws regarding irregular migration;

9. *Calls upon* all States to respect the human rights and the inherent dignity of migrants and to put an end to arbitrary arrest and detention and, where necessary, to review detention periods in order to avoid excessive detention of irregular migrants, and to adopt, where applicable, alternative measures to detention;

10. *Urges* all States to adopt effective measures to prevent and punish any form of illegal deprivation of liberty of migrants by individuals or groups;

11. *Requests* States to adopt concrete measures to prevent the violation of the human rights of migrants while in transit, including in ports and airports and at borders and migration checkpoints, to train public officials who work in those facilities and in border areas to treat migrants respectfully and in accordance with the law, and to prosecute, in conformity with applicable law, any act of violation of the human rights of migrants, inter alia, arbitrary detention, torture and violations of the right to life, including extrajudicial executions, during their transit from their country of origin to the country of destination and vice versa, including their transit through national borders;

12. *Recalls* that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[2] recognizes that everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted to him or her;

13. *Takes note with appreciation* of the successful implementation by some States of alternative measures to detention in cases of undocumented migration as a practice that deserves consideration by all States;

14. *Urges* States to ensure that repatriation mechanisms allow for the identification and special protection of persons in vulnerable situations and take into account, in conformity with their international obligations and commitments, the principle of the best interest of the child and family reunification;

---

[14] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 48* (A/63/48).

15. *Underlines* the right of migrants to return to their country of citizenship, and recalls that States must ensure that their returning nationals are duly received;

16. *Reaffirms emphatically* the duty of States parties to ensure full respect for and observance of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations,[8] in particular with regard to the right of all foreign nationals, regardless of their immigration status, to communicate with a consular official of the sending State in case of arrest, imprisonment, custody or detention, and the obligation of the receiving State to inform the foreign national without delay of his or her rights under the Convention;

17. *Strongly condemns* the manifestations and acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against migrants and the stereotypes often applied to them, including on the basis of religion or belief, and urges States to apply and, where needed, reinforce the existing laws when xenophobic or intolerant acts, manifestations or expressions against migrants occur, in order to eradicate impunity for those who commit xenophobic and racist acts;

18. *Requests* all States, in conformity with national legislation and applicable international legal instruments to which they are party, to enforce labour law effectively, including by addressing violations of such law, with regard to migrant workers' labour relations and working conditions, inter alia, those related to their remuneration and conditions of health, safety at work and the right to freedom of association;

19. *Encourages* all States to remove obstacles that may prevent the safe, unrestricted and expeditious transfer of remittances of migrants to their country of origin or to any other countries, in conformity with applicable legislation, and to consider, as appropriate, measures to solve other problems that may impede such transfers;

20. *Welcomes* immigration programmes, adopted by some countries, that allow migrants to integrate fully into the host countries, facilitate family reunification and promote a harmonious, tolerant and respectful environment, and encourages States to consider the possibility of adopting these types of programmes;

21. *Requests* Member States, the United Nations system, international organizations, civil society and all relevant stakeholders, especially the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, to ensure that the perspective of the human rights of migrants is included among the priority issues in the ongoing discussions on international migration and development within the United Nations system, bearing in mind the discussions of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/208 of 23 December 2003;

22. *Invites* the Chairperson of the Committee to address the General Assembly at its future sessions under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights";

23. *Invites* the Special Rapporteur to present his reports to the General Assembly at its future sessions under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights";

24. *Invites* Member States to strengthen their efforts to raise awareness of the important contribution of migrants to all spheres of society and to consider the development of appropriate tools to highlight the contribution of migrants to recipient countries, including through the collection of data and the development of statistics;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the resources necessary, from within existing resources of the United Nations, for the Committee to meet for two separate sessions in 2009, the first session to be of two consecutive weeks' duration and the second session to be of one week's duration, for the purpose of meeting the demands of the workload arising from the increasing number of reports of States parties that have been submitted to the Committee, and invites the Committee to consider ways of further improving the effectiveness of its working sessions;

26. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution at its sixty-fourth session and to include in that report an analysis of the ways and means to promote the human rights of migrants, taking into account the views of the Special Rapporteur, and decides to examine the question further under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights".

70th plenary meeting
18 December 2008